

May 24, 2016

The Honorable Thomas Casperson
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

**Re: Support for Senate Bill 953 and Proposed Revisions to the Highway
Advertising Act**

Dear Senator Casperson:

I am an attorney who represents multiple clients that own properties in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties with billboard companies as their tenants. Thank you for introducing Senate Bill 953 ("Proposed Bill") and addressing many of the issues resulting from MDOT's interpretation and enforcement of the 2014 amendment to the Highway Advertising Act (the "Act").

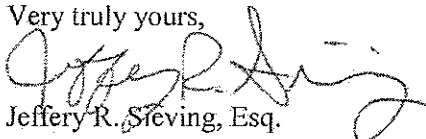
However, there is one area of concern for my clients that did not appear in the final Proposed Bill that I understand may have been in a previous version. In a previous version, landowners were granted an opportunity to erect or solicit other billboard operators to erect a sign, which may currently be classified as "non-conforming" or "non-standard", where a former billboard lessee abandons or relinquishes control of its sign structure. In Michigan, most billboard landlords are family's or Michigan property owners that own and/or operate the property where the billboard is located.

I strongly urge you to consider a provision like this for the final Proposed Bill. It will level the playing field between the family or small business supplementing their income from billboard rent and the large billboard operators using the Act as a sword to drastically cut rental costs in future leases or subject the landowner to the complete loss of supplemental income when the billboard is removed. Also, in most cases, large billboard operators use the threat of removal after they have enjoyed the benefit of the location for 20+ years with minimal increases in rent that does not even cover inflation.

Furthermore, the Proposed Bill could include language requiring the surrender of interim permits in exchange for the opportunity. This actually reinforces the purpose of the Act by not adding to the proliferation of billboards, but rather, potentially reduces the number of outstanding interim permits.

Therefore, I believe adding language to the Proposed Bill giving a landowner the opportunity to erect a billboard that might otherwise be non-conforming under the Act would be a welcome equalizer to the landowners and likely reduce the outstanding number of interim permits.

Very truly yours,


Jeffery R. Sieving, Esq.